

Job vs. Career: Is There A Difference?

Try to picture yourself getting ready for a workday. Do you see yourself looking forward to what you may accomplish or learn as you work toward those career goals you set? Or are you dreading getting out of bed and having to put in another eight hours at what you know is just a dead-end job?

Choosing the kind of work you will do is important – not only financially, but emotionally and mentally too. Once you graduate from high school, a career school, or college, you are likely to begin looking for work. With a full-time job, you could spend more than 2,000 hours, every year of your life, working. That is more time than any of us spends on anything else (except sleeping).

Rewarding careers don't miraculously happen. They are a result of planning, finding mentors, and putting together the jobs that are building blocks to what becomes your career. You can spend your time



in a string of jobs that have nothing to do with your career goals.

These jobs may help you gain some work experience, but your work time might be better spent on jobs that relate to what you hope to do in the future. Now, you might be asking yourself whether a "job" and a "career" are the same thing?

The terms "job" and "career" are generally used interchangeably. But there are important differences between the two terms. The differences go beyond dictionary definitions too. They could affect how you view work in your lifetime.

To begin building a fulfilling career, you need to do some soul searching. What is really important to you? How do you see religion, family, life, and children? What is your cultural background and how does that affect your daily life? These are some of the important questions to ask yourself as you begin your life's work.



TIME TO START THINKING ABOUT A CAREER?

The answer to when a person should start thinking about a career is different for everyone. However, the best answer is probably right now. It doesn't matter if you are just starting high school, about to graduate from high school, or if you've been working for a while. Whatever grade you are in or whatever age you are, now is the right time to think about what you will be doing in your future.

You may tell yourself that you have plenty of time, or that it's too late for you, and for some that may be true. But if you continue to think this way you will wake up one day and realize you have no plans or goals for your future. Having no plans will put you in the uncomfortable position of being forced to choose a path which may not be in your best interests.

You should realize that two major events occur when you graduate from high school. First, you will probably be eighteen years old and as such you are legally an adult. As an adult, you will have the rights – and the responsibilities – of any other adult (like your parents.) You will have the right to vote and conduct yourself without your parents' permission. However, you will also be responsible for your actions. The transition into adulthood can be overwhelming for



some due to the combination of freedom and responsibility.

A second big change that will occur after you graduate from high school is that there will no longer be a set path to follow. It will not be like before when your parents placed you in kindergarten and then enrolled you in elementary school and then middle school and then in high school. After high school, there is no set path to follow. You have many options to choose from, such as attending a university, junior college, technical school, community college, or entering into the military, or an apprenticeship program, volunteer program, or deciding to be a homemaker. The responsibility of deciding among the multitude of options will be entirely up to you. Your parents, teachers, counselors, and friends can give you advice, but ultimately the decision will be yours to make.

Take time to think about your future career now. Instead of being forced to make a choice that isn't right, you will be able to research and investigate what it is you are good at, what you like and dislike, and what occupation or course of study would be right for you.

If you feel like you've been forced into a bad choice, now is the time to make a good choice and to pursue it. Don't feel bad if you make a wrong choice – just have the courage to keep trying until you get what you want.

Source: Texas Career Success, 1998-2000

Career ◀ ▶ Job ◀ ▶ Career ◀ ▶ Job ◀ ▶ Career ◀ ▶ Job

Jobs are often just a means to an end. You need a job to help pay for college tuition, so you find something part-time at a local restaurant. You take a summer job at the mall so you'll have some extra spending money for hanging out at the mall. You might interview for a job after school with a temporary agency to help pay bills.

Jobs can lead to careers. Sometimes jobs are time limited, task-oriented positions to help meet the goals of an organization and not likely to be a springboard to a career. On the other hand, that job you recently landed may be the first of many long steps toward a bright and rewarding career.

A career is something you build throughout your lifetime. Career planning is the ability to look ahead and think about where you are going and what steps you need to get there. A career is something that excites you, that uses your best skills your talents, and that fits with your lifestyle.

Start building a resume that will help you move down your career path. Look at the bigger picture of your life's work. You still might need to get that summer job. But as you look at the kinds of jobs available, consider how this particular job will help you in your career or what kinds of skills you will gain that you can use later.

Shift your thinking. Rather than ending up with a hodgepodge of part-time or other unrelated "jobs", you'll have the building blocks for starting your career. You'll have the beginnings of experience, paid or volunteer, related to what you want to do with the rest of your life.

As you grow in your career, you may find yourself in many roles: worker, learner, family member, parent citizen, and in many different settings like home, school, community, and the workplace.

If you continue to work on career planning throughout your lifetime,

you will find that although your career may shift and grow, it will still easily fit with the lifestyle that you have chosen and with the events, planned and unplanned, that we all face in the adult community.

Source: Oregon's Career Trends

You've applied, sent your resume, and had an interview, now what? You can stand out by sending a

Thank You Letter

A short letter or even an e-mail to the interviewer can do wonders to enhance the good impression you've already made in the interview.

June 1, 2001

Ms. Business, Human Resources Manager
ABC Company
111 Employment Way
Anytown, NH 03355

Dear Ms. Business:

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the customer service position this morning. Our conversation gave me a better understanding of ABC Company and the requirements of the job.

My customer service experience and interpersonal skills will definitely make a contribution to your company. I am also proficient in all the computer software applications your company uses.

I enjoyed meeting the staff and touring the facility. This is clearly a quality organization with an emphasis on efficiency and a dedication to teamwork. I would consider it a privilege to join your team. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Andy Applicant
Andy Applicant

Source: adapted from Texas Career Success, 1998-2000